



A TREATISE  
**C O N C E R -**  
**N I N G** THE EXTREME  
*F A M I N E O F T H E C I T I E*  
 of Paris at this present: which is as grie-  
 uous as it was at the siege of Ierusalem.



**T**he Kings Maiestie, ha-  
 uing often heard of the  
 great famine and mis-  
 rable calamitie, where-  
 into the obstinate parti-  
 sians had wilfully plun-  
 ged themselves, onely  
 through the persuasions  
 of the chiefe of the lea-  
 guers side, being for the  
 most part of the Cleargy. And albeit the extremitie  
 were great, where into they were fallen, yet the re-  
 port of the increased misery, since that time hath found  
 ed so lamentable in his royall eares, and amongst  
 all the rest of his princely and honozable traine, that  
 the remembrance thereof will not easily passe or be  
 raced out of minde: the certaine truth whereof, is as  
 followeth.

The Citi-  
zens of  
Paris issued  
forth  
to the  
king.

After the king had entred S. Denis, as you heard long since with all his power, and that he was in full possession thereof, there issued out of Paris diuers and sundry times many more creatures, resembling rather the Anatomies of death, then people possessed with life, so soze were they wasted with famine, and consumed throught extreame hunger, that excepting the skinnie, there was nothing left to couer their feeble bones. So that it preuailed nothing to be young or beutifull in this case, or to boast of health, or to haue heapes of gold, soz their stomackes desired that, which soz golde nor siluer could bee gotten, yea their berie hartes failed them soz want of necessary nourishment. wherupon they became carelesse of life, desiring death or speedie deliuerie from this their miserable estate, that they might no longer behold with their eyes, nor heare with their eares, the bitter cries of their starued children, and the wonderfull multitudes of their friends and kindred, which soz want of food daily died within that populous and great Cite. It resolued therefore to finish their dolefull dayes, or to finde reliefe soz maintenance of their loathed liues, with leaue of the cruell gouernours they issued (as I said befoze) out of the Cite, and presenting them selues befoze the kings souldiers, fel downe at their feet, yelding them selues to the kings mercy, about the number of a scope at a time, men, women and children, who being brought incontinent befoze his roial maiestie, so sone as they entered his sight, with bitter teares trickling downe their cheekes they prostrated themselves at his feet, and as loude as their feeble voices would be ferie, they cried, Viue le Roy, God save the king. His maiestie amazed at the sight of so pittifull a spectacle, and moued with a kingly compassion towards them, saue with his eyes and conceiued in his heart, wha

The kings  
mercifull  
heart.

into

intollerable famishment the obstinate Citie had already endured, but hauing a desire to learne further of the state thereof, after he had wel viewed the persons of these miserable men, he demanded of them the intent of their comming. Wherevpon they returned this answer, that soasmuch as they were not able anie longer to indure the grievous famine whereinto they were brought by the long and deserued siege which his Maiestie maintained about their Citie, and being brought so low, that the gouernours could not by reason of their weaknes imploie them in any seruice, they had free liberty to depart the Citie if so they thought it conuenient: as being people that were likely with many moze in the Citie, to cause an infection to arise by means of sicknes among the rest of the inhabitants, wherefoze, sayd they, most noble and victorious king, wee are come vnto your Highnes, acknowledging that wee are vniworthie of anie longer life, by reason we haue bin most vniust and rebellious subiects, and vniworthie that so gracious and mercifull a prince should open his mouth vnto vs, neuer theles, most mighty king, had it not bin through wicked perswasions, we had neuer yelded to holde on so cursed a side, but with whome perswasions could not preuaile, they vsed meanes to enforce, being well assured that they holde the most parte by constraint, whose bodies being enclosed within the stonie walls of Paris, haue euerie date their heartes infolded with their king, considering within what small compass there is scope enough with fauour and gentlenes to be gotten, and yet they be at the point of death euen for a small quantitie of bread, that may with their eyes behold euen plentie among beasts while they themselves pine and cannot come by it, whereby the difference is shewed betwixt the fauour and furie of a king,

The Citizē's  
kept by constraint.

king, and therewithall, the recompence of obedience and rebellion.

We confesse therefore, most noble king, that the mightie and iust God hath bent himselfe against vs, and poured forth the viol of his wrath ouer these traiterous confederates of the Leagues, of which number we must of force account and acknowledge we haue too long bene, and therefore we humble submit our selues into your maiesties hands, to deale with vs as it seemeth god in your sight.

His Maiestie hauing heard this lamentable complaint, reuiued their hearts with a sauourable countenance, and according to his princely disposition, in a milde manner demaunded what provision of victuals (in their iudgements) remayned yet in the citie, and what it was wherewith they hoped to sustayne the liues of so infinite a multitude as remayned in the towne, wishing to declare the same in all truth and simplicitie of heart, euen as they would hope to finde mercie at his handes for their known and manifest rebellion, and how long time they supposed the same would last.

Before the mightie and dreadfull God of heauen, who knowes the secrets of the harts, and shall iudge the thoughts that are hatched by vnt ruth, so wil we, said they, shew and declare this to the king, as farre as our memoerie and knowledge doth stretch. And if your maiestie find vs false. let the same be recompenced with the wildest death that euer anie did endure. And herewithall one of them who was knowne of best iudgement, and that had ben of great account in times past, put forth his voice before the king, and most part of the princes and nobles about him, speaking as followeth.

Necessitie  
endes many  
shuffles.

Necessitie the whetstone of mans wit, hauing inforced

enforced me among these my companions and sorrowful  
 associates, with an infinite multitude of my friends,  
 hirsfolke and neighbours to search for sustenance, for  
 the maintenance of me and my poore wife and children,  
 inquired by all meanes after fode when it became scant  
 in the Citie, being the onely care that every person had  
 to seeke for the same: and albeit after a small time that  
 we were besieged, wholesome fode was kept wonder-  
 full close and scant among us, yet our eares were ever so  
 diligent to hearken after it, that by one meanes or other  
 we alwaies heard where it was to bee had for money,  
 and although the prouision was great within the citie,  
 yet by reason of the marvellous multitude of inhabi-  
 tants, within five monethes after, there was no whole-  
 some fode to be had for gold nor treasure, for the Poples  
 and principall of the citie, suspecting a long siege, got as  
 much thereof as they could for their owne prouision, and  
 the cloysters with the vniuersitie did the like: and as for  
 the Clergie, they stayed not behinde any in that matter,  
 being men wise enough to take the choice before all o-  
 ther, by which meanes the common sorte of the Citi-  
 zens sore found the smart thereof, and in vaine sought  
 they after that they could not finde: when flesh failed,  
 butter and cheese began to grow precious at rich mens  
 tables; though at the first they much repined thereat,  
 as people that had not bene much acquainted with such  
 course cates. But the iust God seeing our withthank-  
 full hartes, that scorned his gifts, and despised his ble-  
 ssings, in two monethes after sent such a change, that  
 the flesh of Horses, Asses, Dogges, Cats, Rats, Mice,  
 Weasels, and Moles, became daintie dishes at gentle-  
 mens tables, and bore such a price, that no poore person  
 was able to compas any, & then our queasie stomacks  
 began to be contented with any thing, were it a frying  
 panne full of frogs, a dish of snailles, or a skellett full of

Necessity  
 finds many  
 shifts.

Rats, mice  
 & other  
 vermine  
 good meate  
 in Paris.

garden toymes too in broth: she that went in her hode,  
 would haue bene glad to haue licked her lippes after  
 them, and would haue bitten her dearest friend to the  
 banquet, had hee not bene of her owne household, so  
 sweete a sauce and so sanow did hunger make the same  
 to taste, and yet many of those that thus haue sired, and  
 yet woulde bee glad to mate with the worst of these  
 thinges rehearsed before they felt the force of hunger,  
 with many othes, said they would starue unto death be-  
 fore any such corrupt thing should comfort their stomacks;  
 and yet was all this but a taste of famine, and nothing  
 comparable to that which afterwarde fell vpon vs, for  
 in short time our bycades of pease, tares, oates and acorns  
 utterly failed vs, so that none could be had or found in a-  
 ny place to be solde, although we would haue killed one  
 another with thrust, to haue gotten the quantitie of a  
 farthing loafe (farre worse then any which in former  
 time we gaue our horses) though we would haue giuen  
 a french crowne for so much, and those vermine also  
 that we prepared and dressed, as before is shewed, was  
 on all sides so caught vp and eaten, that in the end there  
 was none to be gotten, neither for one nor other: and  
 then began such mortallitie through famine, that ten  
 thousand haue already dyed thereof, as may be sene in  
 the register booke, and at this present, ten thousand more  
 are like to perish through the like extremitie. A most  
 grievous and intollerable burden sufficient to enforce a  
 sinit hart to remorse and pittie, how great a warning  
 ought this to be to all cities that are in a flourishing  
 estate, where plentie poureth forth her treasures, in so  
 much that delicacie is become lothsome, in respect of an  
 insatiable desire, and daintinesse will not be contented  
 without great superfluitie, euery man wisheth for bet-  
 ter, and no man thinketh that he hath goodes enough,  
 and few remaine thankfull for any thing: consider, you  
 that

Ten thou-  
 sand dead  
 of famine  
 in Paris.

that be excelle, and wil not so much as lift vp your eyes. much lesse your hartes, to render praises for so great benefits, consider (I say) how ioyfull & glad many nobles & men of great worship would be of the worst bit or bone that you sing vnder the table to your dogs, while your selues in the midst of your excelle, sit turning with your knives point, the meate in diuers dishes, and can scant among them all finde one morsell to fit your fancie, notwithstanding how gladson a present the least of your laues would be in Paris, let those imagine that can conceiue of their miserie, and how many would intreate vpon their knees, to be preferred, as it were, to the shaking of the table cloth, or carrying away of the trenchers. Undoubtedly, I am perswaded, that if the dauntiest mouthed dame in Europe had but one monethes experience of the like want, she should afterwarde while she did liue, esteeme better of the least crumme, then she doth now of all the daunties vpon the table. I beseech God be mercifull vnto vs, & forgive our vnthankfulness, & grant vs grace to reforme our liues, lest we be plagued for our leuities. But to returne to the former matter.

The king hauing heard this doubtfull discourse, proceeded further, and demaunded whether before their issuing forth of the Citie, they had found no meanes whereby they of the towne might haue something to put into their bellies to strengthen the hart, and to helpe the stomache, and abate the fury of hunger.

The kings  
second de-  
maund.

Three weekes (saide the reporter) wee continued without any sustenance, saue onely Flies and Beettles, whereby we sought to sustaine our selues, with diuers other like thinges, till in the end our emptie intrels enforced vs to seeke some meanes for reliefe, at what time the people deuised to gather all kinde of wotes such as grew within the compasse of the walles, which being parched or otherwise dyped, we ground them in a mill,

Flyes and  
Beetles.



Bread of  
saw-dust.

Dead mens  
bones eaten

Men worth  
twenty or  
thirty thou-  
sand pound  
made com-  
mon soul-  
diers.

and therewith made vs breade, but alas, tender comfort  
conceiued were thereby, though we were glad of any  
thing, so in lesse then two dayes, our people were con-  
strained to finde some other remedie against hunger,  
whereupon it was deuised to saw all the timber wee  
coude come by and conuert it into dust, and thereof to  
make vs another sorte of breade, which deuise continu-  
ed longer then many of the former, and contented vs a  
great deale better, by reason we had some quantitie  
thercof to fill our emptie stomackes, but this was not to  
be had without money, except a body had of their owne  
therewith to make it, in so much that all the wood  
plankes and boordes which conveniently we coude come  
by, was put to that vse, and when this began to grow  
something scant, every man hauing care principally to  
nourish himselfe and meditating dayly how to inuent  
meanes to procure sustenance, being a thing wherein  
every one applyed his wits, at length the extremitie  
was such, that the Churchyardes were digged for deade  
mens bones, and all the saide bones they carried toge-  
ther into one place in the citie, where they might lye  
free from the raine, the which afterwarde being washed and  
dried, were beaten in peeces and ground, and thereof an  
other sorte of bread was made, and thus we were glad  
to feed our stomackes with the bones of christians. In  
which time if it may please your Gracitie to pardon my  
long and tedious discourse, I am to declare a most wo-  
full accident which then happened.

There was then dwelling among vs, a very ho-  
nest and substantiall man, which was Sergeant ouer  
one of our companies, for the skill they founde to bee in  
him, who was employed as were the rest of the Citi-  
zens to be a souldier in the Citie for those which of late  
were esteemed men worth twentie or thirtie thousand  
pounds, were enforced to become common souldiers,  
whose



whose substance thereby is wasted and brought to nothing, so much neede haue they of men in the citie. This Sargeant before spoken of, comming heme to his house about seuen dayes agoe, his wife and his children came presently running about him, hoping hee had brought something for them to eate, at what time there was a neighbour or two in the house staying his comming, and with his wife lamenting the common calamitie, hoping from his mouth to heare some newes of the peeling vp of the Citie into your highnesse handes. But the cries of the starued children interrupting the talke bestirrt him and his neighbours, the poore man with a sorrowfull hart sat him downe, fetching a deepe sigh, not knowing what to doe for them, the children still cloying his eares with their pittifull complaints. A father, saide they, will you see vs dye for want of bread: if there remained any thing vpon our bones beside the skinne, we would not let to feede thereon: but if no other remedy may be founde, let the one of vs serue for foode to the other, or els spare not our liues to feede our mother and you, better were it for vs by death to be ridde of our miserie, then to endure a famine the ende whereof is vnknowne: is there any left in the Citie saue men to feede vpon? why may not the one of vs deuoure the other alive, or why are the deate bodies of men couered in the ground that might serue a hungry stomacke to feede vpon. The father looking vpon them with a heauie hart, after many teares shed on euery side, hauing pondered these speeches, started vp as a man purposed to giue them encouragement, and with a comfortable voice briefly saide vnto them, be content my children, and be of good cheare, so sone as these my friends are gone, I will giue you that which shall content you, but alas, if it were sufficient for vs all, I would be loth to part with their company, notwithstanding I hope they consider

The complaint of children for lacke of food.

the time as it is, and will not thinke any discourtesie herein, being assured, themselves in the like case woulde doe the like to me, then turning to his neighbours hee saide, the time hath bene we would not haue denied our meate, but our money, but now our money is nothing in respect of our meat, and woe be vnto them that would not giue the poore money to buye meate where it is to be had, wherefore I beseech you leaue vs a while till we haue refreshed our selues, then after I will answere any thing I shall heare spoken by you: hereupon the two men departed, and shortly after, knowing that their dinner lasted not long, these persons went againe thether, knocking and calling for him, maruelling that no body came to make answer, wherefore being very familiar friends, and suspecting they had bene in their upper chamber, went by, whereinto they no sooner entered, but presently they espyed the good man, his wife and two children (about the age of fourteene yeares) all hanged one beside another, and a bill vpon the good mans breast, wherein was writen, By this meanes did I first set my wife and children out of miserie, and after my selfe, for which offence I aske the Lorde mercy and forgiuenesse: and that your highnesse may be the better satisfied of the truth hereof, the men be here that first heard his wordes, and after were wofull witnessses of this Tragedy, in such extremitie remaines this miserable Citie.

A man first  
hanged  
his wife &  
children,  
and after  
him selfe  
for lacke of  
food.

The Parisians  
causers of their  
owne destruction.

This Maiestie that scant could reframe teares to heare this dolefull discourse, answered: Ah Paris, thy blood be on thy owne heade, it is thy selfe and not I that hath caused this great calamitie, the Lord be witnesse twixt thee and me, and rewarde me after the innocencie of my hart: after these wordes causing the starved people to be refreshed, he departed into his chamber, commaunding that no more should be suffered to come forth of the Citie in such sorte.

Thus

Thus haue you hard the good successe of the Kinges  
 spaiesse, whom no doubt, Almightye God prospereth  
 and preserueth, with the euill successe of rebellious  
 people, and the enimies against Gods truth, whom hee  
 in iustice punisheth, and doth in his iust iudgements  
 bring to confusion: Almightye God stil prosper the kings  
 proceedings, and send confusion to his enimies, except  
 they speedely repent and yelde themselves vnto him, as  
 in right they ought, which God graunt. Amen.

FINIS.

